product development and quality upgradation through appropriate training programmes, providing comprehensive testing facilities through network of laboratories etc. to promote readymade garment industry including that of Tamil Nadu and to accelerate exports.

Families without Electricity

*459. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether 60 percent of the families in India do not have electricity at home;

(b) what steps Government are taking to cope with this situation;

(c) the manner in which Government propose to increase private participation with so many bureaucratic hurdles; and

(d) the steps Government are taking about T&D losses because twenty-two per cent of the power does not reach the consumers?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM): (a) and (b) Accroding to Report of the Sub-Group on Rural Electrification-9th Plan (Sept. 1996), out of 1115.89 lakh rural households, 341.07 lakh (31%) had been electrified at the beginning of the Ninth Plan.

Government has taken various policies and programmes in the power sector aimed at improving the power supply position in the country.

To improve financial resources, the power sector has been opened for private sector participation in generation, transmission and distribution through appropriate legislative amendments.

To improve the financial health of SEBs, the Electricity Regulatory Commissions Act, 1998 has been enacted to pave the way for creation of Regulatory Commissions at the Centre and the State. The ordinance has been replaced by an Act of Parliament with certain amendments. The Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC) has been set up in 1998 to regulate tariff of generating companies and to regulate inter-state transmission including tariff of transmission entities. State Electricity Regulatory Commission have also been set up in 14 States.

To improve inter-regional transfer of power, a perspective plan to set up a National Power Grid has been developed. It is being executed by Power Grid Corporation of India.

To seek more investment in transmission sector, the Government have issued guidelines for private sector participation in transmission.

Government has an Action plan for development of North Eastern Region encompassing capacity addition programme as well as strengthening the transmission and distribution system. An additional 1% subsidy has been provided on Power Finance Corporation loans for the N.E. states. It is also proposed to introduce a scheme for budgetary support to the North Eastern states establishing a common State Electricity Regulatory Commission.

Energy Conservation Bill has been introduced in Parliament. With the passage of this BIll, Bureau of Energy Efficiency will come into existence. This measure will result in increase in availability of power.

Other Policy initiatives by the Government include formulation of new Hydel Policy in August 1998. A new mega power policy has also been announced, Under the Accelerated Power Generation and Supply Programme, Power Finance Corporation Provides necessary funds for on-going power projects of 9th Plan at 4% concessional interest rates.

Rural electrification scheme is implemented through Rural Electrification Corporation. About 5,06,401 out of 5,87,258 villages have been electrified at the end of the February, 2000.

(c) Concrete steps have been taken by the Government for simplifying and decentralising the procedure for clearance of private power projects and to attract more private investment in the power sector. The measures include:

— minimising the number of clearance required to be obtained for the purpose of appraisal of the private power projects by Central Electricity Authority (CEA).

— minimising the role of the Foreign Investment Promotion Board by providing for automatic approval for foreign equity in selected categories and enlarging the provision for automatic approval for such projects. Accordingly, projects for electric generation, transmission and distribution will be permitted foreign equity participation up to 100% on the automatic approval route provided the foreign equity in any such project does not exceed Rs. 1500 crore.

— delegating more powers for environmental clearance to State Governments.

— raising the limits for power projects which require the clearance from CEA.

— preparation of a shelf of projects to facilitate early execution and reduction of time required for preparation.

— close monitoring at various levels to expedite clearances, remove bottlenecks and to resolve the last mile' problems in achieving financial closure through Crisis Resolution Group.

(d) The Central Electricity Authority has issued comprehensive guidelines for reduction of Transmission and Distribution losses to the State Electricity Boards/Electricity Departments. The following measures have been suggested:—

— Upgradation of operating voltages.

— Reduction of length of LT lines.

— Location of transformers near load centres.

— Adoption of low capacity transformers near consumer premises.

— Installation of shunt capacitors; and

— Improvement in construction and operation techniques.

In the Power Ministers Conference held on 26.2.2000, it has been resolved to undertake the following measures in order to achieve a reduction in the transmission and distribution losses:—

— Energy audit at all levels.

— Time-bound programme of 100% metering of all consumers by December, 2001.

— Reduction and finally, elimination of power theft within a specified time frame.

The Rural Electrification Corporation is providing financial assistance to the State Electricity Boards for undertaking system improvement projects in rural areas. The Power Finance Corporation is also providing funds to the State Electricity Boards for System Improvement Projects in urban areas and for installation of capacitors and meters.

Additional financial assistance through a combination of grant and loan for strengthening and upgradation of the Sub-transmission and distribution network by undertaking specific projects will also be available from the current

financial year under the Accelerated Power Development Programme (APDP). The modalities for implementing the APDP Scheme are being finalised by the planning Commission in consultation with the Ministry of Power.

Rise in crime due to infiltration

†*460. PROF. RAM GOPAL YADAV: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the reaction of Government on the news-item captioned Sakht Qanoono Ke Karan Pak Nahin Jaate Bangladeshi appearing in the "Dainik Jagaran' dated 10th March, 2000; and

(b) the steps Government are contemplating to take in order to check incidents of prostitution and other crimes which are on the rise due to foreign infiltrators?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) In view of the long and porous border with Bangladesh and also on account of various push and pull factors, many Bangladeshis have managed to sneak into various parts of the country. Due to ethnic and linguistic similarities, they are able to mingle easily with the local population.

As per available reports, some Bangladeshi immigrants cross over to Pakistan in search of better livelihood. About 3846 Bangladeshi infiltrators have been apprehended along the Indo-Pak border since 1997 (till March 2000).

Various measures have been taken to check infiltration. These include, *inter alia,* construction of border roads, border fencing, raising of additional battalions of the Border Security Force, intensification of patrolling along the border, increase in the number of outpost towers, provision of surveillance equipment including night vision devices, etc. The matter has also been taken up with the Government of Bangladesh at various levels from time to time. There are standing instructions to the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations to detect and deport foreigners staying illegally.

(b) Instructions have been issued to the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations to deal firmly with those found violating the law of the land.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.